"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

The Christian Freeman.

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A DAY AND NIGHT AT BETHLEHEM.

By LUCRETIA P. HALE.

OUR tents lay upon the slope of a rugged hill; on one side the ravine below it was cut by another hill, on the ridge of which stood the town of Bethlehem with the Church of the Nativity, and opposite us rose still another slope, barren and rocky.

We had reached the church not long after noon, having left Hebron that morning, a long, fatiguing ride, but full of interest—fatiguing to the body, but exciting to the eye and mind. We had passed down the narrow steep streets of Bethlehem, so steep that I had called to our muleteer to come and lead my horse, for I was afraid I should slip off over his sloping neck. We went by the large square in front of the church, down a steep pathway, along the side of the large building on our way to our camp. But it was suggested we should stop then and visit the church, that we might not be obliged to climb up the steep pathway again after reaching our tents. So we gladly left our horses, and mounted up through a graveyard, and some high steps to a side entrance. We found ourselves in a stone-paved court, the high walls of the building shutting it in on three sides, the yellow hyssop growing between the crevices of the stones far up. At a door met us a handsome friar, and we found we had chanced upon the Latin entrance. He led us into a large, low room, the refectory, perhaps, and asked, "Would we have some coffee?" to which we gladly answered "Yes," for a cup of Turkish coffee is a cordial one would never think of refusing, especially after a long ride. There was a broad window with a deep recess, carpeted and cushioned, where I gladly flung myself, and we waited, looking round at pictures of saints against the wall.

Our monk soon returned with the refreshing coffee, and made himself our guide, leading the way in his light brown frock, with its hood and girdle, like all the pictures of monks. He took us along stone-pavemented passages, and we met a school of children coming from one of the halls, and we passed on to the Latin church. This was like most other Catholic churches, with separate chapels, some tawdry, some impressive, one dedicated to or by Maximilian, I cannot remember which. We passed a poor woman kneeling before one of the shrines.

But soon our guide led us down a stone stairway. We now entered chapels of earlier work than by Christian hands, the natural caves, over which the Empress Helena had built her church.

We came now into the cave of a real hermit of the old times where *Jerome* had actually lived. So our guide told us. "Here was where he read, here where he slept," I cannot remember the number of years. We had an actual glimpse of the true, old monastic life, and tried to comprehend what must have been its strength and motive.

But we were led away into other caves, of which one and another legend was told us. In one knelt an old monk, his face hidden in his hands. That had been his posture, they said, for weeks and months. Was he trying to live over again the life of Jerome? Was it his own soul he was trying to save? Or did he truly see some heavenly vision that was making amends to him for his denial of life? And is he still kneeling there now, or in some other earth is he still striving to realise the heaven still far away? We left him, for our guide had already gone down a longer flight of steps, and was taking from

his girdle a large key. We followed him and in silence. For he opened a door into a small grotto, lighted by a few lamps. It had a marble pavement, and a star in mosaic, and the inscription, "*Hic natus est Christus*," and around it twined little wax tapers like those we were bearing in our hands.

Above, in all the architecture of the church, in all the showiness of its adornment, there had been nothing that could touch us; but here in this dim light, in this low-vaulted spot, we knelt in spirit before the influence of the place.

As the Christmas bells chime into the night they recall again the spot: "Here Christ was born." Ah, it might have been so. The cave is cut in rudely-carved rock, and for centuries has been here. Such grottoes are still used in Syria for harbouring cattle. In this place Mary and the child *may* have been sheltered, "because there was no room for them in the inn." So we said to ourselves, and there is a thrill that gives a reality to that *may* have been. A little spot—but the life that was born here has changed the history of nations. "To bring peace on earth," did the angels sing? Alas, said Jesus, "I came rather to bring a sword!" And up from this place two other stairways led to the Greek and the Armenian churches—because it would not be safe for these three differing creeds of Christ to venture in by the same door!

We went up the stairway into the Greek church, and saw afterwards the remains of the orignal church of the Empress Helena, with its columns, which still retain some of their bright original colouring, and we came out and down the long, steep pathway that wound on beyond the church and round another steep slope. Here was our little cluster of tents, with its home-reminding American flag in front; and here we passed the night, a bright moonlight night, and thought how "centuries ago" Jacob wandered here and buried Rachel not far away, and how David lingered on these hills as a shepherd boy, and then again:—

"*Hic natus est Christus.*"

In that little grotto with its wax tapers, in the hill-side, "Christ was born." A quiet night, only the motions of our animals, the horses and the mules, or of their drivers talking; there was something unreal about it all, something that seems more real to look back upon. The next morning S. found by the door of the tent a little blade of grass with two butterflies upon it. She sat down before it with her water-colours and had painted a picture of it before they flew away. Their little lives of one day form one bound up in our memories with great eternal lives—two butterflies, brown and gold, born in the spot made sacred by Hebrew patriarchs and poets, along with him now fresh in our hearts, of whom we sing,

"How Christ the child is born to-day."

SOUR WORDS.

1. THEY indicate a sour origin. They show that the heart is in an acid state. The hearer of such words cannot but have his own, and a not very complimentary opinion of the speaker.

2. They make the speaker himself more sour. Words react upon those who utter them. As kind words beget kindness, and increase the power of it in the soul, so sour words increase the bad temper of those who use them. They add fuel to the fire and augment the heat.

3. Sour words dangerously tend to make the hearer sour. They create an atmosphere which he breathes, and the virus is likely to penetrate his soul and make him sour too. Vinegar gives its own character to anything it can reach.

4. Sour words are all but certain to give sourness to the countenance. The face is a tell-tale of the heart, and the heart's sourness, rising to the lips in bitter words, has wonderful power over all the features. Look on the countenance as its owner is using sharp and bitter words. Do you see a smiling June or a scowling November?

5. Sour words are not soon forgotten. Sharp and piercing, they enter like iron into the soul. As with hooks of steel, they hang on to memory. All that you can recollect of some people is the sour words you have heard them use.

Now, my young friends, if sour words indicate a sour heart, and make the speaker more sour, and give a sour countenance, and make one's sourness long and painfully remembered—there are five reasons why such words should never be found upon your lips. Let the last ones you have used be the last.

HOW TO BECOME A UNITARIAN.

By a Convert.

From my earliest recollections my most ardent and sincere desire has been to be a Christian in its most humble, devout, and Christlike sense, and to that end, at an early age, I searched the Scriptures, attended the Sabbath-school, and united with the Methodist Church. These I regarded as necessary auxiliaries to an advancement in the Christian life. But sectarianism was distasteful to me from childhood, as I desired to look with equally good feeling upon the worthy of all denominations. This deep charity I found very difficult to exercise—in the bounds of the Church—and as circumstances called me away from Church relations I determined, for the time being at least, to content myself with trying to live a Christian life, according to the best light I could gather from reaping and doing every act of Christian charity I could. I also closely observed the daily walk of Christians of different sects. And to this end I have visited all public institutions as much as possible, both criminal and charitable. Here I had been brought in close proximity with all denominations, and thereby have learned from what sect most spontaneously flows the purest, deepest, the most charitable devotions of the heart. As I am now not connected with any Church name, I do not hesitate to aver that, with my knowledge of the Unitarians as a sect, I have always found them the most generous not only in pecuniary donations, but most liberal in forgiving those whose errors have led them into all manner of evil associations and crime. In all places and under all circumstances I have found them the most exemplary followers of the instructions of Christ and the most humble and efficient teachers of that brotherly love which he administered. I have met with them around the couch of sickness, with poverty in all its squalid forms, and in the sad chamber of death, and they have always shown a marked devotion of duty to every human sufferer, and a calm trusting confidence in the providences of God, as teaching us sad but effectual lessons in his dealings with his children. In these and other cases they have done acts of kindness and brotherly love unsurpassed by others; and when I have heard such deeds of human charity denounced by other sects, and themselves branded as infidels, and blind leaders of the blind, it is then that my heart has hungered for that pure and unsophisticated love taught by Him whose example they not only follow in sunshine, but through thorny mazes of ridicule and persecution. It is in places like these I have mentioned that the Christian's face shines with that serenity and hope which the world knoweth not. Lord, give us more of these blessed proofs that we have been with thee and learned with thee.

Lord, let us do these works of thine
In meekness, charity and love;
That on us thy pure face may shine,
A passport to our home above.

O, may the wandering ever find
A shelter and a leading hand,
And words of wisdom, gentle, kind,
To teach them of a better land.

D. E. W.

THE JOYOUS CHRISTMAS-TIME.

By Rev. Henry W. Crosskey.

There are certain special sources of genial gladness connected with the services of Christmas day. Through outward symbols and inward prayers of great joy we connect ourselves with the history of the Christian Church, which for centuries has celebrated the day upon which was born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. We do not come as newly-made beings into a newly-created world. We inherit the glory as the weariness; the joy as the sorrow; the righteousness as the iniquity of the past—and this season would open our hearts, that the glory, and the joy, and the righteousness which have found melodious voice in the Christmas carols of ages may enter within us, and touch our lives unto happier and nobler issues. As citizens, we are richer in high thoughts, because of our country's heroic history. The famous deeds of vanished centuries quicken the inner life of the living present. The mighty memories of ancient days strengthen every Englishman now on earth.

"In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of Old;
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held."

As members of a Christian Church, we are ennobled by our ties of spiritual fellow-

ship with the saints, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." Our spiritual characters have been formed by the history of Christendom, as our national characters by the history of Great Britain. The prayers we breathe, the hymns we sing, the divine thoughts by which we are most deeply touched, the penitential regrets blended with happiest thanksgivings, the aspirations leading onward our fainting steps—are connected by the living blood of spiritual heritage flowing through the one body, into which by one spirit we are all baptised, with the prayers, the hymns, the divine thoughts, the penitential regrets, the aspirations, which for eighteen centuries have gathered around the name of Jesus Christ. We cannot, even if we would, divide ourselves from the past. The son cannot disguise the tones which reminds us of his father's speech, or the glances which renew his mother's smiles—and in our forms of faith and worship the glances of the mind in its up-gazing thoughts of adoration, and the tones of our prayers and the melodies of our hymns are richly laden with sweet and gracious memories of the centuries from whose Christian history they have sprung, and by whose unseen but benign influences they are still determined.

Christmas is the one festival left within the Christian Church in which natural joys are blended with divine sanctities. We meet and breathe our prayers, and endeavour to sanctify our lives by hallowed meditations upon the "Saviour," "born in the city of David," "which is Christ the Lord." Amusements which would be esteemed irrelevant for the Sunday will be welcomed as most fit and proper for Christmas day; and the more thoroughly we can help others to forget care in generous gaieties, and remove ourselves from moodiness, the better shall we believe that we have kept the birthday of our Lord. It is the one religious festival we dare call "merry" (the "merry Christmas"), and supremest human mirth is blended with holy thanksgivings for the advent of the Lord Jesus. The close connection between the festivities and sanctities of this season indicate the revolt of the human heart against those formal restraints of a technical pietism, which render so dull and gloomy the supposed spirit and demands of a Christian life. Our gladdest thoughts ought to be blended with our most sacred memories, and the fact that Christmas day is, in the morning, a day of prayer, and in the afternoon a day of mirth, bears glorious witness to the healthfulness of natural instincts, and the vitality of a Gospel, which, while it cleanses the heart from sin, delivers the soul into the hands of a living God who is (in the grand words of an old teacher of holy faith) "Father of Lights and Everlasting Glee." Hence is it fitting that through signs and symbols, grouped around us in forms of architecture as in the adornments of the season, we should testify our connection with the great history of the Christian Church, that, through the charmed channel of noble memories, redeeming influences may be poured upon our present necessities; and hence, also, it is fitting, that by wreathed holly entwined with flowers that never fade, and gracious blossoms kindly protected and cherished amongst inclement storms, the touched heart should manifest its blessed faith that the Christian piety it most reverently respects keeps their deathless beauty amid the changeful seasons of earthly circumstance, and are the genial sources of its everlasting joy.

The birth of Jesus Christ, regarded historically, has changed the whole course of civilisation more profoundly than any other known event. It has brought an intense spiritual influence to bear upon the higher life of centuries, and is intimately connected with every point of contrast between ancient and modern history. No event could have appeared of less importance than the birth of the child Jesus. There was no room at the inn for the babe—destined to stand to worshipful hearts for ages as the image of the living God. Immediately after the death of Jesus Christ the number of the names of his disciples was one hundred and twenty. Yet, after a strange and marvellous fashion, a new impulse of redeeming power seemed introduced into the world. Here and there arose men, who, touched by the memory of a life so divinely led, sought in penitence and love to dwell within that kingdom of heaven of which the master spake. They cast themselves with passionate attachment upon the idea of a pure and perfect life, manifested in Jesus, their Lord. Especially were the hearts of many women moved. The love of the glorified image of a saintly life touched

them with the fervour of a human devotion, uplifted into the sanctity of prayer. They felt that the purity of the Son of Man was a consecration of womanhood, and gave sure hope of deliverance from the grossness of the wild passions which for ages their sex had been compelled to endure. Thus it happened that here and there, aroused and sustained by some great memory or apostolic word of power, a nobler life was led, and higher hopes of human destiny were cherished through the name of the Holy One of Nazareth; and each higher hope and nobler life quickened a circle of divine influences which gained new force to widen its boundaries from every heart it touched.

The disciple's devotion to an ideal of personal purity, awakening immortal hopes through its connection with faithfulness to an unseen Lord, conquered widest distinctions of rank and fortune. The slave and the master became alike servants within the kingdom. Never, perhaps, in this world's history did rich and poor meet together as in that early Christian Church. The unseen Lord and Master would acknowledge but one family in earth and heaven, drawing all men into one fold, under one shepherd; and the mighty promises dwelt within the lowliest soul, "All things are yours; or the world—or life—or death—or things present—or things to come—and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "For Christ's sake," tender care for the poor, and maimed, and blind, and deaf, the sick, the disappointed, the unsuccessful, and the dying, sprang up within the Christian Church. Men sought out the bruised and the wounded in the beloved flock, leaving them no longer to mourn and perish unheeded and despised. The whole spirit of civilisation in ancient days was woe to the conquered. Woe to those conquered by infirmity or poverty—let them suffer—the gods are not with them or they would not be unblessed. Woe to those fallen by the wayside, dropped out from the line of march. Woe to those who could not hold their own against any comer, and whose arms were broken by stronger hands. Not the slightest remorse was felt in dooming the defeated gladiator to death. "He is beaten in fair fight; let him die," was the frequent verdict of the crowd. Make way for the victor! Let kings follow at his chariot wheels. Let the trumpet sound. Let armed legions press on, and the world acknowledge the master who can conquer it.

With that Master of Nazareth, born on the day of our festival, came the new spirit of merciful regard for the defeated. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." At the great tenderness of the words which fell from the Lord's lips the wearied learned to smile, and the despairing to hope, and the down-trodden to re-gather strength, and a certain divine spirit was breathed into the world which reached the by-ways of life, and sought out haunts of misery, and wheresoever it reached taught the weak things of earth to confound the mighty. Brethren, if there be any service befitting this season, it is to carry on this ministry of Christ, and unto the needy and desolate bring peace and hope. Does not every one know some family with whom the world has dealt hardly? Some bearer of a heavy burden? Some struggler against weary misfortune? Does not every one know some one whose Christmas he can make happier? Through our instrumentality the angel may be heard saying in many a lowly place within every town, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born this day, in the City of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

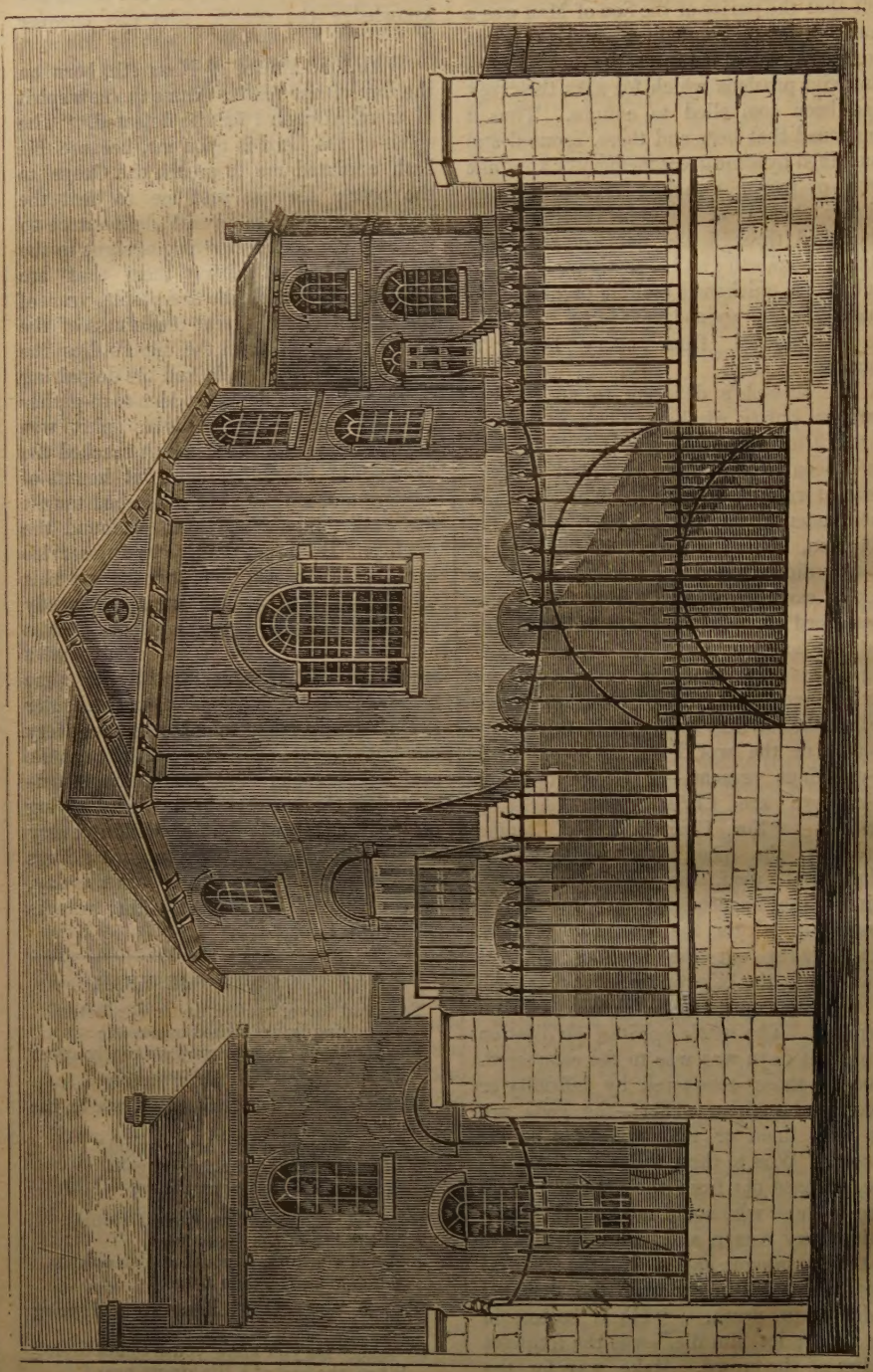
The dead leaves rustled under our feet,
The dying leaves sighed overhead;
The breath of the year grew strangely sweet
As the hours of the autumn fled.

We thought, "There is never a flower on the wold,
There is never a bud in the wood,"
We found in the field a face of gold
Framed in a pretty green hood.

It lay like a gem in frost-stained mould
At the lips of the dying year,
A kiss of youth on a mouth grown old,
A kiss more sad than a tear.

We said, "There has come a dream of spring
To the heart of the failing year."
He said, "Do you know youth comes to sing
When the end of a life draws near?"

S. Pierce.



UNITARIAN BAPTIST CHURCH, DOVER.

UNITARIAN BAPTIST CHURCH, DOVER.

In the midst of the fatal contests between Charles I. and his Parliament, and at a time when the blood of thousands shed by the sword of civil discord, stained the glory of England, the Baptists were introduced into the county of Kent, and gained a footing in the borough of Dover.

Mr. Richard Hobbs was their pastor in 1643, and it is certain that they had a meeting-house at Dover in 1655, at which time Mr. Edward Prescot, of Juston, was co-pastor with Mr. Hobbs ; but it does not appear how long their place of worship had been established prior to that period. The congregation were driven from their meeting-house in 1661, and a lock placed on the door, by order of the mayor ; but it was taken off during the night, and thrown into a porch before the mayor's house. After this they assembled secretly in their private houses, and some of their members were imprisoned in Dover Castle on account of their nonconformity. Mr. Tavenor was ordained pastor in 1681. At this period the congregation had become numerous, and many resided in the neighbouring towns and villages. To meet their convenience it was agreed to separate into three divisions, and elders were to be chosen by each of these churches. Samuel Tavenor and Richard Cannon were chosen by the church at Dover ; Henry Brown and Isaac Slaughter by the church at Sandwich and Deal, and Messrs. Author and Hadlow by the church at Folkestone and Hythe. United meetings of these separate congregations were annually held at Dover on the first Sunday in May. During a period of fifty-three years Mr. Tavenor suffered much on account of his non-conformity, and was not only frequently taken from the meeting-house while preaching, and had before the magistrates, but in several instances was harassed by warrants to take away his goods. He was once imprisoned, but having interest at court he soon obtained his release. After this he departed to London, where he continued to preach as often and as publicly as the times would admit, till he could again return to his flock at Dover. After the death of Mr. Tavenor in 1696, and of his co-pastors, Richard Cannon and Thomas Partridge, Messrs. John and David Simpson were ordained about 1712. The Simpsons were succeeded by Mr. Robert Pyall in 1732, having previously been a minister in the society six years. Mr. Pyall died in 1759, and no other pastor appears to have been appointed till Mr. William Ashdown and Mr. Stephen Philpott were ordained in 1781. Mr. James Porter succeeded to the co-pastorate in 1792 ; Mr. Ashdown resigned in 1795, but continued in communion with the society till his death in 1810. Though Mr. Benjamin Martin had officiated as minister both before and after Mr. Ashdown's resignation, he did not accept of the pastoral charge till August 21st, 1800. A Sunday school, the first of the kind in Dover, was instituted in connection with the church by Mrs. Priscilla Pierce, a descendant of Capt. Taverner, in 1803. The foundation stone of a new and elegant chapel was laid on February 15th, 1819, by Rev. Sampson Kingsford, of Canterbury, which was opened for public worship May 2nd, 1820, sermons being delivered by Revds. J. Kingsford, J. Gilchrist, and William Johnson Fox. Mr. Martin's long, zealous, and useful ministry was drawing to a close, and only three years were allowed him to officiate in this new structure. He died of a painful disease in London, on the 14th November, 1823, aged fifty-four years. Mr. George Culmer Pound, after officiating as assistant minister fourteen years, was chosen pastor on the decease of Mr. Martin, and was assisted for some time by the Rev. John Marten, now minister at Peckham. Mr. Pound resigned the pastorate in 1841, and was succeeded by the Rev. John A. Briggs, of Manchester New College, who remained minister of the church until 1844, when he was succeeded by the Rev. John Lettis Short, of the General Baptist Academy, who, on removing to Bridport in 1847, was followed by the present minister, the Rev. Thos. B. W. Briggs, whose pastorate has already extended over twenty-three years. The chapel, of which we give an engraving, cost upwards of 2000 guineas, and we regret to hear there is still about £100 of the sum unpaid, although it has been built fifty years.

Brixton Chapel. — We regret that we omitted in our notice of the above chapel last month to note that the late Mr. Bicknell and the late Mr. Travers were the leaders in the founding of this chapel, and thus the establishment of a Unitarian church at Brixton. May their example be followed in more places.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Pile on the Christmas logs
Higher and higher;
Cheerily, cheerily
Crackles the fire.

Now let the bells ring out
Merrily, merrily,
Now let the children shout
Cheerily, cheerily.

Let no harsh voices sound
Drearily, drearily;
Let nought but joy abound
Merrily, merrily.

Now let home-voices sound,
Brimful of meaning;
Now let bright eyes abound,
Radiantly beaming.

Let not a note be heard
Breathing of sorrow;
Let not a soul bring here
Care for the morrow.

Herald of future bliss!
Joyously drawing:
Hail to thee! hail to thee!
Bright Christmas morning.

IMMORTALITY.

By Rev. E. H. Chapin, D.D.

The feeling *of* immortality is a mighty argument *for* immortality. If a man asks me to refer to reason, I answer, not if the feelings actually contradict reason; but when it supplements reason—when it can be shown that it is a part of reason, I often think feeling is the very core of argument. Notwithstanding the artful dialectics of some skilful advocate, although we cannot touch the logical fact, yet we feel the folly of his argument and withhold conviction. This positive instinct gives force to the argument of reason. As says the poet—shall man,

——"Who seems so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the Psalm to mighty skies,
Who built him forms of fruitless prayer,
Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love creation's final law;
Though nature, red in tooth and claw,
With rapine, shrieked against his creed;—
Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the true, the great,
Be blown about the dead dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?"

But argument is not demonstration. Like Mary, we look through our tears and see. But with all these deep yearnings, these internal prophecies, we are in a position to confirm and be confirmed. The instinct has been met by the Resurrection. That confirmation is a historical fact. The spiritual requirement confirms the fact. This is the peculiarity of Christianity; it confirms the deep yearning instincts of man, and does not confound reason. Christianity makes its appeal with its risen Saviour, and the human heart, like Mary's heart, feels the divine significance, and responds to it. It appeals to the spiritual nature, and that nature responds. Here is a two-fold confirmation. The fact confirms the instinct; the instinct confirms the fact.

Christianity does not rest alone upon this. The historical argument of Christianity is stronger. The very fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has been the foundation of the Christian Church. You could not have had a Church without it—all the wonderful display of achievements, of hope, of patience, of love, and triumph, has gone out in the faith of a Resurrection. The Christian Church is the offspring of a miracle, or born of a lie. If the latter, the world has been fooled by a lie for eighteen hundred years. It has been made great and victorious by a lie. Men do not take the priest's word in the pulpit any more. They want the historical facts, and take the deep Gulf Stream currents or actual results. They accept Christianity whether it has grown out of a lie or out of a fact.

There is a vital significance of the Resurrection in Christianity. If we take it away there is nothing left. You may erect a beautiful system of ethics, like Socrates or Zoroaster, but there is no life or power in it, and, as it has been said, if we remove this foundation of the Church it will make "the grave of a religion."

Here is the deep yearning and vital want like that in Mary's heart. Here are the tears through which Mary is looking for something beyond the grave; to find the dear body in some form; and there comes through Christ's lips the answer, "Why weepest thou?" Oh, sad heart, do not you feel the power of that triumphant answer? Perhaps some may say it is hard to believe; they never saw an actual Resurrection. Your senses are your guide. Why not believe those who said they did see the tangible, bodily presence? Is there not a natural limitation? When science tears open the ordinary veil of natural vision, and reveals the immen-

sity of the universe, do you believe in the splendours that it reveals? Why, in your shop, garden, railroad, and steamboat, new forms of matter are bursting upon you. When you see that there is a higher life of order and being, will you say that your possibilities are not the possibilities of the universe? Or do you feel that you ought to go back upon the instinctive argument, the palpable fact of tasting and seeing? Had not you better believe in that which answers to the deep requirements of our nature? In that event reason and instinct are reconciled.

Having considered the grand comprehensive fact, let us observe one or two facts connected with it.

1. The moment we admit the Resurrection of Jesus we admit the fact of the appeal—the appeal of the spiritual to the spirit in man. This is the great question of our day, whether there is a God or no God. It is a question beyond anything the Roman council may discuss, or the fighting sects either; whether we stand in the circle of grinding, inflexible materialism and uncaring necessity, or at the open sepulchre of Jesus, with a spiritual power beyond. Where are the generations who have gone before and followed the Saviour; the weak and weary, the little infant and the grey hairs of the patriarch, the saint and sage, the victorious hero and the fallen martyr, loved ones and dear ones—where are they gone? Into nothingness? Into the blackness of annihilation? Or do we look through this wall of matter, and see them standing in splendour in the spiritual kingdom?

2. There are modes of recognition in the future life. Jesus stood before Mary in the Resurrection state. In that body he ascended, and this suggests the inquiry, Shall we know one another in the future life? Did Mary know Jesus? She did not at first discern him by his form, but by the peculiar tone and thrill of his voice. Do you think, O mother, you will have to search the far regions of heaven to find your child? This spiritual tone of Christ is the utterance of spirits in heaven. You may be sure, that in the same way that Mary recognised Jesus, light, knowledge, and communion will be given to those who would draw nigh unto us.

3. We may consider the way in which the Resurrection of Jesus becomes to us, I may say, an experimental reality. It becomes so by our spiritual accordance with him. Paul does not speak of the Resurrection as a material fact: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." It is the spiritual ascension with Christ, the rising with him, and as we rise with him immortality does not become doubtful any more. The fact of Resurrection becomes a necessary reality. "Great hopes are for great souls," the larger the compass of a man's brain the fuller his heart, the richer his spiritual developments, so he appreciates the truth. Take "a dull life within the brain," a poor, miserable, swinish life, and no wonder such an one cannot believe in the future relations. But the awakened life of our souls by Christ's spirit and Christ's power gives us the assurance of immortality. If this is so, is it not well for us to seek occasions for communion with Christ? Sunday is a good day to rise from our sluggishness, and meanness, and hesitation; it is a good day to rise, because we are weak and sinful. The sacrament of communion is an agency of spiritual life, communicated to our souls by communing in contact with the historical fact in Christ, and the separation of these broken symbols of love, purity, truth, and holiness. It means all that is highest, deepest, and truest in our being. There are few, perhaps, who do not require it, and who discard the bodily elements. But the great majority want it, not because they assume to be very good in doing so, but because they are not good enough; because they are weak and frail; because they know how the powers of evil triumph over them, and the darkness of vision overwhelms them. They want to be lifted up, and, like Lazarus, raised from the dead. Why not rise with Christ? For we enter upon its realisation, its substance, when we hear and truly respond to his call. For he does call us. He calls us by his suffering and his triumph; calls us by these emblems of love and sacrifice; calls us by these beautiful types of life leaping out from the womb of the earth; these floral symbols of beauty; calls us by name, transforming us from death into life. He calls you and me as he called Mary, by name, and not with formal words. And as he calls us, let us respond

with devoted loyalty of soul to that appeal, with the full spiritual energy of our lives, our reverence, our love, as Mary responded to him, and say, "Rabboni, Master."

SONNETS.

In these stone-clipping, pebble-crushing days
We leave our ancient faith in gravel beds,
With antique flints, and bones, and arrow-heads,
And find new creeds in quarries, rocks, and clays;
And now loquacious boys, who thirst for praise,
Each sceptic joins, and all his folly weds;
The rude blasphemer's voice he never dreads.
Dazzled, not warmed, by God's eternal rays
Of truth, he seeks to move faith's old land-marks,
Retails the unripe knowledge of the age,
And says the tale of Noah and his ark
Was culled from Fable's mythologic page.
Yea, this disciple of this modern school
Asserts that Moses was a knave—or fool.
The sceptic views the Himalayan chain
Of mountains raise their peaks into the sky,
And says the scripture deluge was a lie!
No faith can e'er delude his subtle brain
To think they were engulphed beneath the main;
Yet science plainly shows to every eye,
That every mountain peak, however high
Above the level of the lowest plain,
Was once the bottom of the boundless sea:
And where the broad Atlantic rolls its tides,
Unnumbered states and empires used to be
Before the Andes raised their mighty sides.
The vast Pacific, too, was once dry land
Ere Europe, Asia, rose at God's command.
There was a flood—Nature proclaims to me
The truth; in every clime we find its traces,
And oft the sea and land have changed their places:
The land on which men live was once the sea,
And where the oceans are land used to be;
Perhaps there's not a spot the sea embraces
But hath been trodden oft by unknown races,
Perhaps more truly civilised than we,
Those lithoglyphs which everywhere we find,
Vestiges of an ancient boundless main,
Must have amazed the subtle Hebrew mind:
When Moses wrote about the flood and rain,
In allegoric guise he might reveal
These common truths we all must think and feel!

H. Y. J. Taylor.

Gloucester.

THE PASSING YEAR.

Ah! it is passing, passing,
Swiftly and surely away;
And what, as yet, have I brought Thee,
Father, since that First Day?

Then earnestly I came,
And unto Thee laid bare
The treasure of my heart,
All joy and sorrow there.

Repentance strong and deep,
Mingled with thankfulness;
And brightly-glowing hope,
That this year Thou would'st bless.

And Faith that calmly strove
To realise Thy love,
And to know that Thou would'st send
Renew'd strength from above:

In sincerity I laid
These gifts before Thy Throne,
Longing that one more year
Might find them worthier grown.

And now that year is passing,
And fears have o'er me swept,
Lest the faults I then bewailed
Must again be mourned and wept,

Lest the good I truly sought
Should yet be far from me,
And resolves I felt then holy,
Should vain and profitless be,

Then, in answer to my sad doubting,
A voice of comfort sweet
Speaks to me gently, thus:—
"Darling, it is not meet

That thou for ever *doubt*,
Rather work, and hope, and pray,
That angels bright may bear thee
Onward from that First Day.

Some doubt 'tis good to have,
Some sorrow and some fear,
And to keep before thee ever
The passing of the year.

Yet trust far more than doubt;
Know that God's mighty arm
Will bear thee through all failure,
Through every grief and harm.

On, on, to the heavenly home
So beautiful and bright,
Where at last He will let thee see
In His own most glorious light,

How, because on earth thou did'st *strive*,
Thy earthly life is blest!
And now, what waiteth for thee
Is love, and joy, and rest."

The Liberal Soul.—A rich old uncle who had two nephews left his will as follows: "To my nephew William I leave all my fortune, because I know he will bestow it on the poor. To my nephew Albert I leave nothing, for the same reason."

UNITARIANISM IN LONDON EIGHTY YEARS AGO.

My earliest recollections of attending Unitarian public worship in London goes back to the year 1790, and then, with my parents, I went to Princes-street Chapel, Westminster, and heard the celebrated Dr. Kippis, whose goodness and learning drew a large congregation. The Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Dacre, W. Smith, M.P., and others of high rank were attendants. It may be known to most of the readers of the CHRISTIAN FREEMAN that the chapels then were called Presbyterian, Essex-street being the only one distinctly named Unitarian, with the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey as minister. The theological position of the ministers and people of about half a dozen of the London chapels then was Arian. Scarcely a word was spoken of a controversial character. The Dissenting chapels were almost all in concealed situations at that time, being up courts and through gateways. As Mr. Lindsey in Essex-street adopted a Liturgy, his chapel and service were regarded as only a small move from the Established Church, for all the Dissenting services avoided liturgical forms and organs in their buildings. The custom of meeting at each other's houses to practise singing was more common then, as the musical part of the service was completely dependent on the voice. It has sometimes been alleged that the introduction of the Unitarian doctrine and worship was the chief cause of the decline of the congregations and the final closing of some. Persons who thus reason appear to forget that a great number of the old Presbyterian congregations declined, and finally ceased, though Trinitarian to the end. No doubt the Unitarian position had serious difficulties to encounter, for, in addition to the want of sympathy in neighbouring churches, Unitarianism was illegal. To deny the Trinity was a crime till 1813, like cheating or stealing. The punishment of burning heretics had long since been abolished, but a Unitarian was still liable to fine and imprisonment. Those few ministers who were of Unitarian opinions consequently avoided theology in their sermons, and in their prayers and hymns they addressed themselves to God, only showing their opinions by not praying to Jesus or the Holy Ghost. Their sermons were thus of necessity very much of moral essays and exhortations to a good life; but as religion is necessarily based on theology, and as on theology they were required to be silent, they were less religious discourses than they are now. The chapels were known as Unitarian, and called Unitarian, or Socinian by some people; but of course not called so by the congregation, or legal difficulties might have been brought upon them. The chapel in Essex-street was the one most markedly Unitarian, because the minister there used a printed Liturgy; and the omission of addresses to Jesus or the Trinity was more marked in a printed book than in an extempore prayer. The other six or eight London chapels which might be called Unitarian did not use a printed form of prayer. It will be readily understood that laws against opinions act not only as threats, but as most powerful arguments with the ignorant multitude. The thoughtless and idle, when they hear that an opinion like Unitarianism may be punished by the magistrates, just as much as stealing, naturally think it equally wicked. Hence no half-educated people were ever Unitarians; the body consisted almost exclusively of those who could give a good reason for their opinions, and whose consciences required them to profess them, or rather to withhold their consent to the more popular opinions. These discouraging circumstances are such as are not easily conceived in the present day, and should make us feel due honour and gratitude to our predecessors of the last generation, who kept alight the lamp of true theology under such difficulties. But let us also remember that the caution which was forced upon the last generation is no longer necessary now. We may proclaim the truth openly and without fear. What was reasonable prudence then would be blameable cowardice now. We may and ought to point out the nonsense of Trinity in Unity, of the two natures of Christ, and of the other orthodox doctrines. We breathe a free air, and ought to profess our Unitarianism on every possible occasion, and the most careless observation teaches that the more boldly it is professed the more readily it spreads.

A BOY'S DIFFICULTY.—A little boy who is early getting tangled in metaphysical troubles, wonders, how the devil came to turn out so when there was no other devil to put him up to it.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

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ADVICE TO TRADESMEN.—A clergyman in a recent sermon quoted an anecdote of an old merchant who instructed his clerks: "When a man comes into the office and talks of his honesty, watch him; if he talks of his wealth, don't try to sell him; if he talks of his religion, don't trust him."

WOMAN'S RIGHT OF OLD.—One of the pictures painted for the occasion to adorn the hall of the Œcumenical Council represented what is called the first council, that is, the meeting of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem on the Antioch question. In the chair presiding is represented a woman, Mary, the mother of Jesus.

FASTING.—John Wesley took a very common sense view of the practice of fasting. He said it was occasionally useful as a substitute for physic; but as to its being acceptable to the deity a man might as rationally imagine that going naked in a severe frost would be of use to his shivering soul, as think he advanced a step farther in his spiritual career by eating a slice of boiled turbot instead of a slice of roast beef.

WANTED A BEADLE.—James, a well-known Glasgow beadle, was once asked by some of the office-bearers of a sister church if he knew where they could get a good beadle, as they were in want of one. "Weel, gentlemen," replied James, "you've asked me for a thing that can scarcely be had. If it were a bit minister, or twa or three elder bodies, I could direct you at ance; but whaur to get a decent beadle is mair than I ken."

HOPE AND WORK ON.—The *Congregationalist* gives an interesting report of some of the sayings of Father Stone, a plucky orthodox minister, who preached in Reading a generation or two ago. In a season of depression, not long before his death, he expected to be lost. Being asked what he would do in the dark world, he replied: "Do! I will get up conference meetings and tell the devils of the Saviour." That would have been just the thing to do in such circumstances.

COVERING UP THE SCAR.—A distinguished preacher, in speaking of the proneness of Protestant denominations to observe each other's defects rather than excellences, says: "When an eminent painter was requested to paint Alexander the Great, so as to give a perfect likeness of the Macedonian conqueror, he felt a difficulty. Alexander, in wars, had been struck by a sword, and across his forehead was an immense scar. The painter said: "If I retain the scar it will be an offence to the admirers of the monarch, and if I omit it it will fail to be a perfect likeness—what shall I do?" He hit upon a happy expedient; he represented the emperor leaning on his elbow with his fore-finger upon his brow, accidentally, as it seemed, covering the scar upon his forehead. Might not we represent each other with the finger of charity upon the scar, instead of representing the scar deeper and blacker than it actually is? Might not Christians learn from heathendom a lesson of charity, of human kindness, and of love?

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.—A little four-year-old miss, hearing a gentleman addressed at her father's house as "Joseph," eyed him intently for a while, and then asked, "Was you Mr. Joseph that was sold by his brethren?" "Yes," replied the gentleman, "I have been sold a great many times, my dear." "O, I was so sorry for you," said the little kindly-heart.

HATS OFF.—Two centuries ago, when houses were not so wind and water-tight as they are now, men very much wore their hats indoors. When grace was said at dinner the hat was reverently lifted, as in Swift's lines,

"Then skimming the fat off,
Say grace with the hat off."

And Chief Justice Sir Matthew Hale, in his advice to his grandchildren, directs them always to sit at sermon with the hat off. It was not necessary to tell them to take the hat off at the prayer-time; that was a matter of course.

THE INQUISITION.—The following is the hypocritical form of words which the Inquisition in Portugal in the last century used when condemning heretics to be burned to death:—"We by this our sentence do cast thee out of the ecclesiastical court as a convicted, confessing, affirmative, and professed heretic; and we do leave and deliver thee to the secular arm, and to the power of the secular court; but at the same time do most earnestly beseech that court so to moderate its sentence as not to touch thy blood, or to put thy life in any danger." — *Priestley's Corruptions of Christianity.*

BRACING THE MIND.—Lord Carnarvon, in addressing the people of Birmingham, used the following illustration: "Travellers tell us that in some of the eastern seas, where those wonderful coral islands exist, the insects that form the coral within the reefs, where they are under the shelter of protecting rocks, out of the reach of wind and wave, work quicker, and their work is apparently, to the eye, sound and good. But, on the other hand, those little workers who work outside those reefs in the foam and dash of the waves are fortified and hardened, and their work is firmer and more enduring. And so I believe it is with men. The more their minds are braced up by conflict, by the necessity of forming opinions upon difficult subjects, the better they will be qualified to go through the hard wear and tear of the world, the better they will be able to hold their own in that conflict of opinion which, after all, it is man's duty to meet."

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